

A detailed map of Washington State, showing major cities, highways, and geographical features. The map is oriented with North at the top. The title text is overlaid on the map.

Transportation Governance: A Civic Conversation

A Forum Conducted by the

Regional Governance Project

January 6, 2005

The Regional Governance Project is a joint effort of The Municipal League of King County, the Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce, the Daniel J. Evans School of Public Affairs at the University of Washington, the Cascadia Center at the Discovery Institute, and the Appleseed Foundation.

Purpose of this forum

- **Identify** some criteria for assessing regional transportation governance structures
- **Describe** the current transportation system's governance structures in the Puget Sound region
- **Compare/contrast** existing structures to a new 'regional authority' structure
- **Prioritize** the importance of the transportation governance issue

Attributes of a healthy regional transportation *system*

Effective	Efficient	System Integration	Public "Equity"
Actually delivers the system needed, good return on investment	Least duplicative effort, overlap, minimum non-productive processes	Reduced competition among modes (no silos); flexibility in use of resources	Transparent, non-discriminatory, takes into consideration externalities, all voices heard

... no matter how it's governed.

Criteria for a 'healthy' transportation system

- **EFFECTIVE:** Public and commerce gets the mobility it needs
- **EFFICIENT:** Sufficient resources are available and largely used for service delivery
- **SYSTEM INTEGRATION:** Different modes are well connected
- **PUBLIC EQUITY:** The system is deemed fair and takes into account externalities

Governing to get there ...

- There is no perfect answer, depends on regional leadership
- 'Regionalized' or 'localized' is much debated
- The governance of a transportation system is 'right' when it produces a healthy transportation system

Symptoms of WA's system

- **INEFFECTIVE:** Public and commerce are NOT getting the mobility they need
- **INEFFICIENT:** Resources diverted to redundant planning, jockeying for priority among projects and interest groups
- **SYSTEM NOT INTEGRATED:** Modes in competition, only anecdotally integrated
- **POPULAR EQUITY:** The system is deemed fair and takes into account externalities

Criteria for a good regional service *governance* structure

- It is politically viable, supported and considered fair by users, taxpayers and the business community
- It is politically 'accountable' through clear identification of officials responsible for its failure or success
- The service area is consistent with both the revenue base and governing structure

Polling indicates governance structure may need reformed*

- Voters want political accountability, but don't know who's in charge
- Voters won't support new taxes for transportation
- 52% give state failing grades (D, F) in transportation investment
- Voters report their #1 concern, congestion, is not being solved
- Voters want integration of modes

Barriers to governance reform

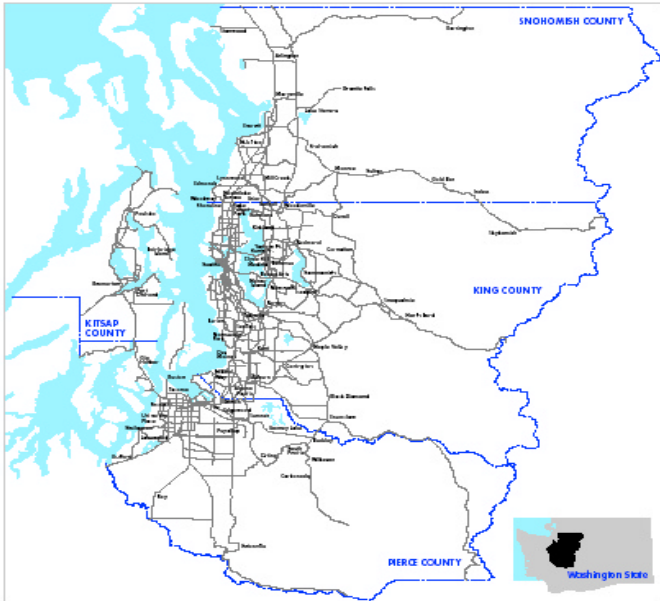
- Potential transaction costs, including loss of political 'turf'
- Existing preference for pluralism, decentralization, populism
- Insufficient data to 'prove' that reform will make a difference
- Availability of alternative 'reasons'
- Lack of motivation (no crisis?)

Washington DOT – state-wide responsibility for



- Interstate highways
- State highways
- State ferry system
- Passenger rail
- Aviation
- Transit support

PSRC – planning for 4 counties



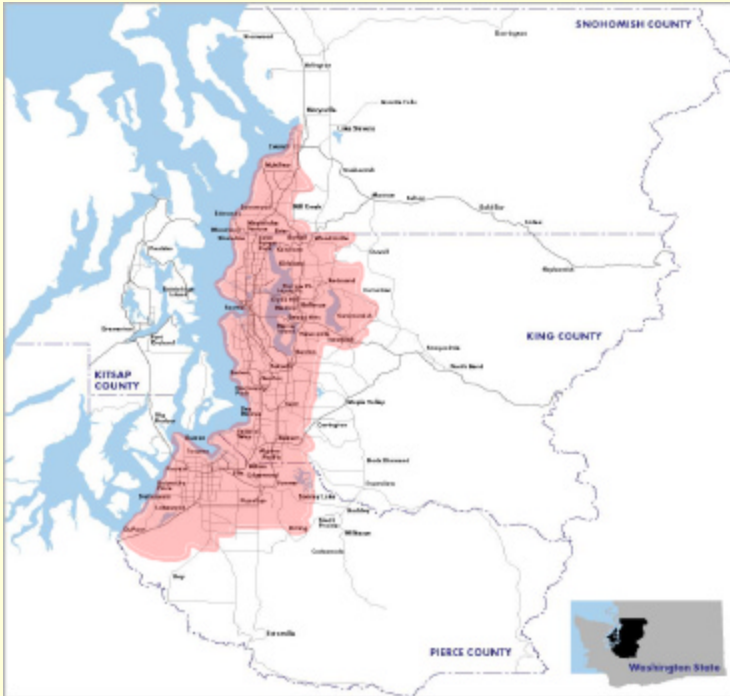
- *Vision 2020* (plan for growth)
- *Destination 2030* (plan for transportation)
- Federal planning and funding (MPO)
- State planning (RTPO)
- Technical assistance for 80+ local governments

RTID – roads projects for 3 counties



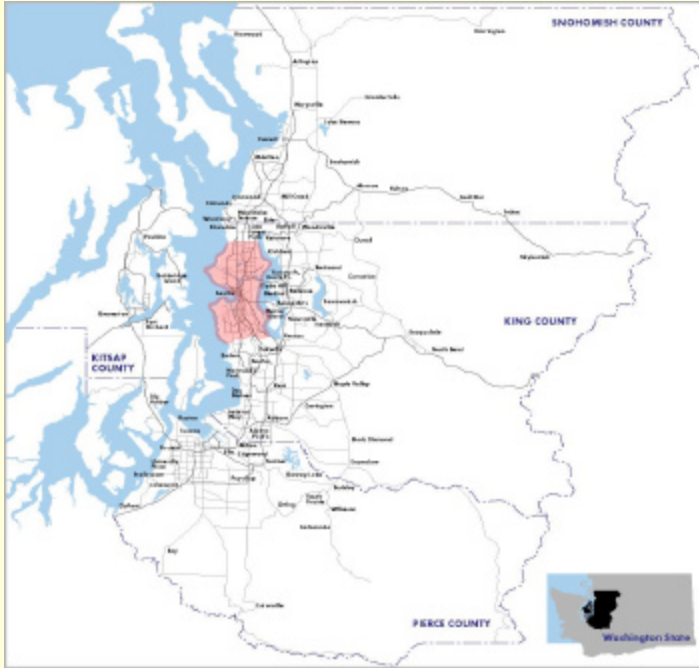
- Plan in development; fate uncertain
- Voter approval of ballot measure required to fund projects
- Capital projects only
- New project cost controls

Sound Transit – parts of 3 counties



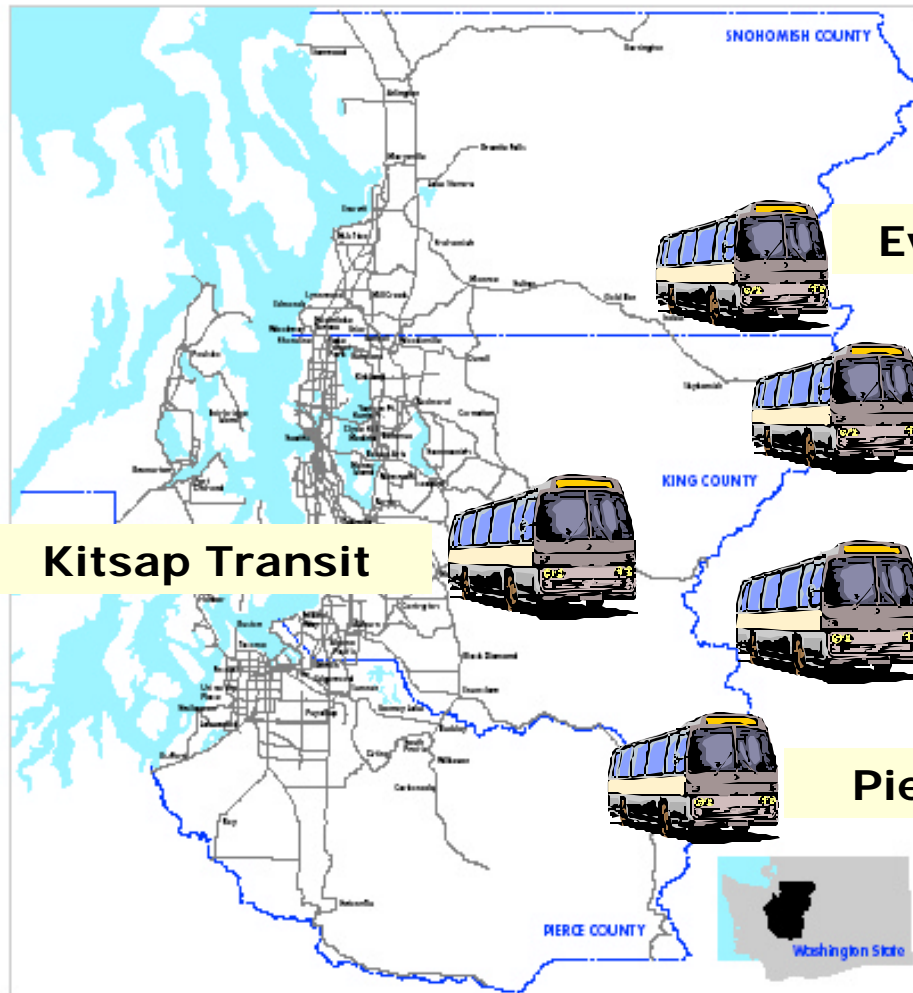
- o 3-county urbanized area only
- o Regional express bus
- o Sounder commuter rail
- o Link light rail
- o Partnerships for HOV system development

Seattle Monorail Authority – Seattle only



- Core city initiative
- Development of 14 mile monorail, Ballard to West Seattle
- Mixed elected, appointed board
- Design Build Operate Maintain (DBOM) contract

And 5 transit agencies



Everett Transit

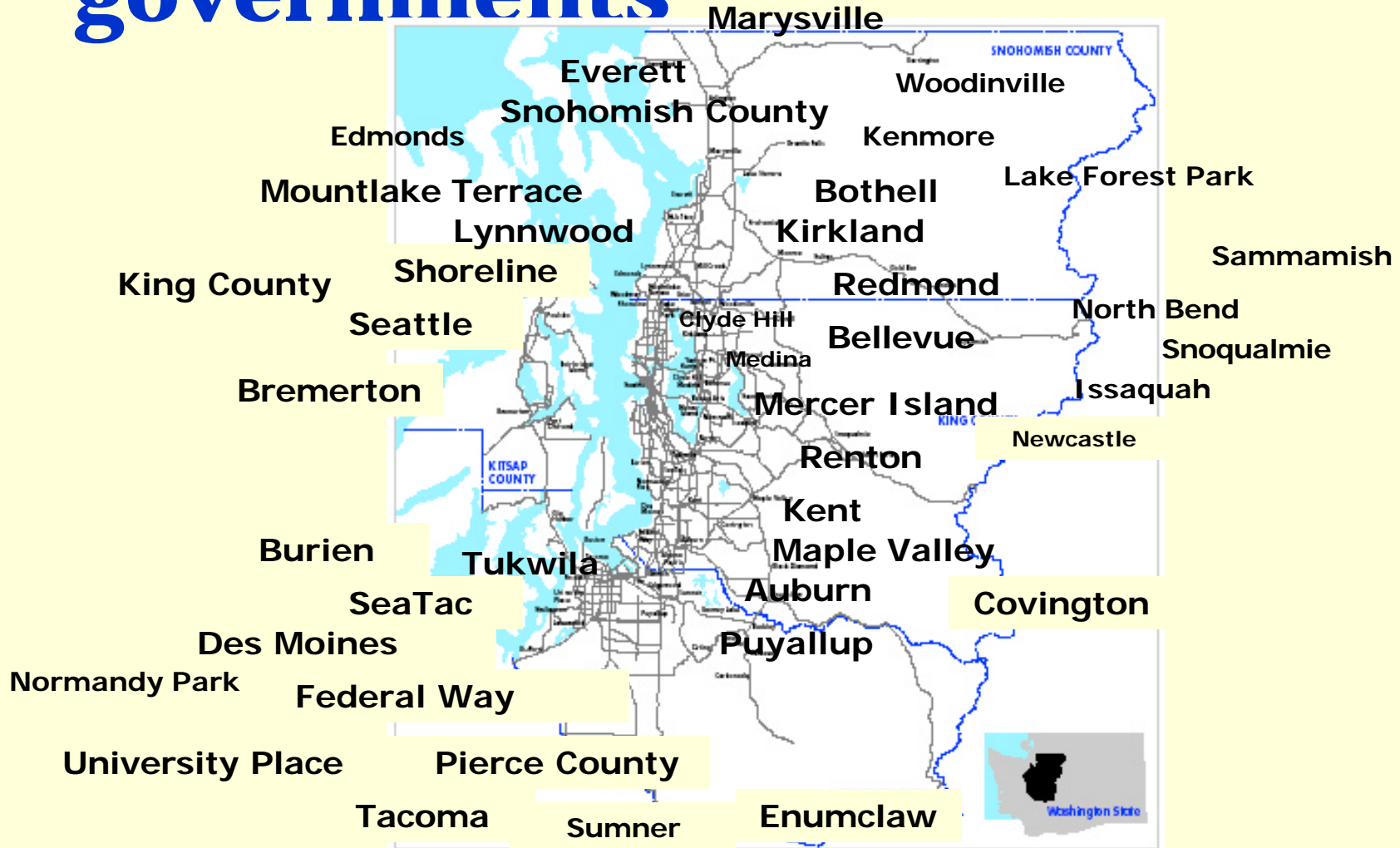
Community Transit

Kitsap Transit

Metro Transit

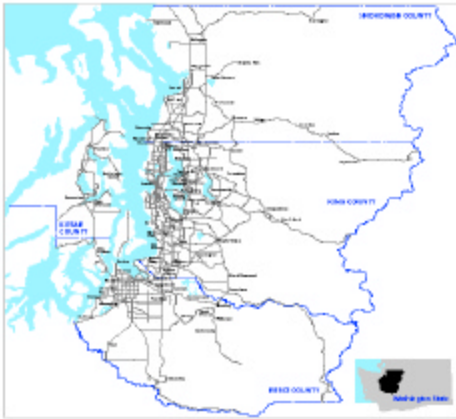
Pierce Transit

And over 80 city and county governments

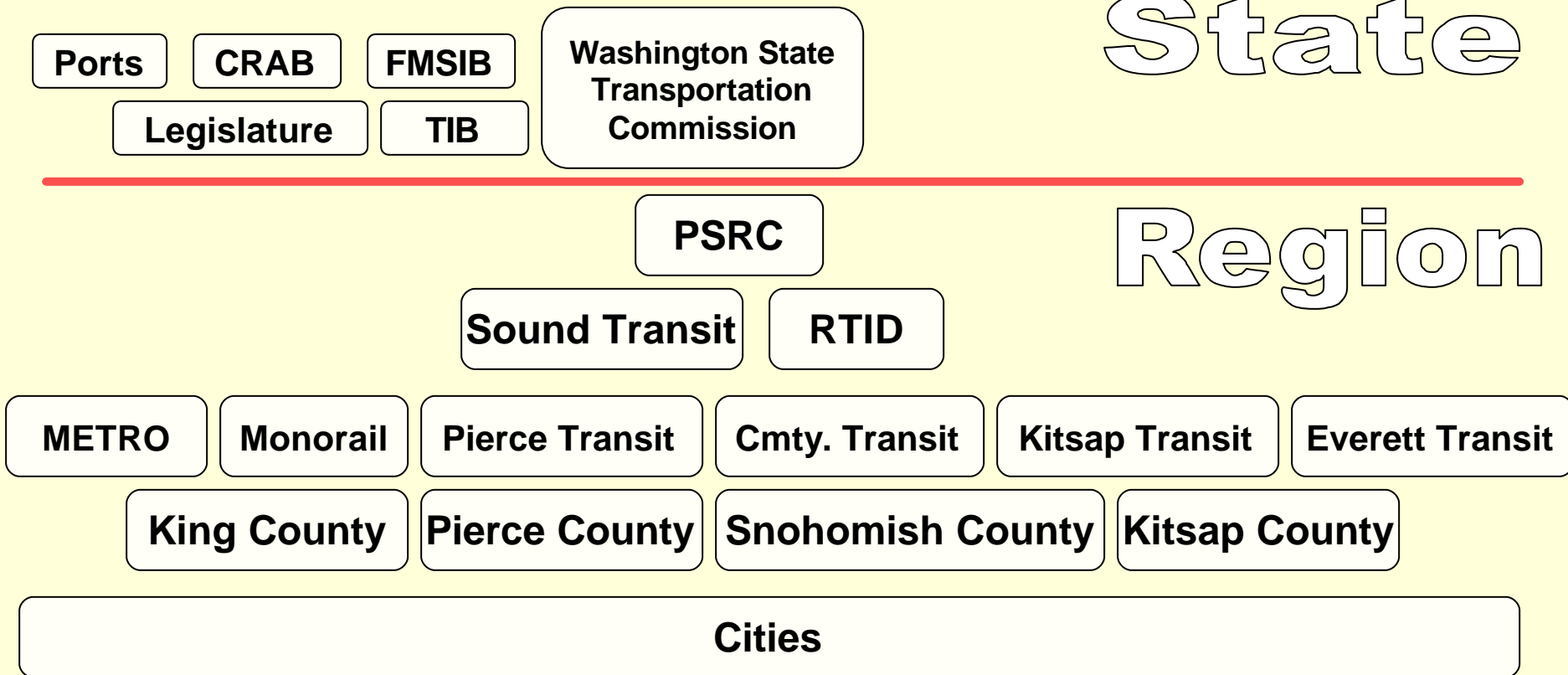


... and that's not counting ...

- Ports of Seattle, Tacoma and Everett
- State prioritization boards
- Private ferries, rail, bus and airlines
- Advocacy organizations for/against travel modes
- Quasi-governmental groups, sub-area boards



Current model



Some of the solutions being suggested to get to a healthy system

- We need to restructure and consolidate governments, '**governance reform**'
- We need a major public educational campaign
- We need to empower existing officials through better laws/programs
- The legislature should just approve new funding sources (user fees, taxes)

Hypothesis for discussion

A change in **transportation governance** would improve transportation system health, but involves trade offs. Goals of change:

- Improving performance (effectiveness, efficiency, system integration)
- Maintaining 'fairness' (public 'equity')
- **Improving public support by increasing political accountability and public understanding**

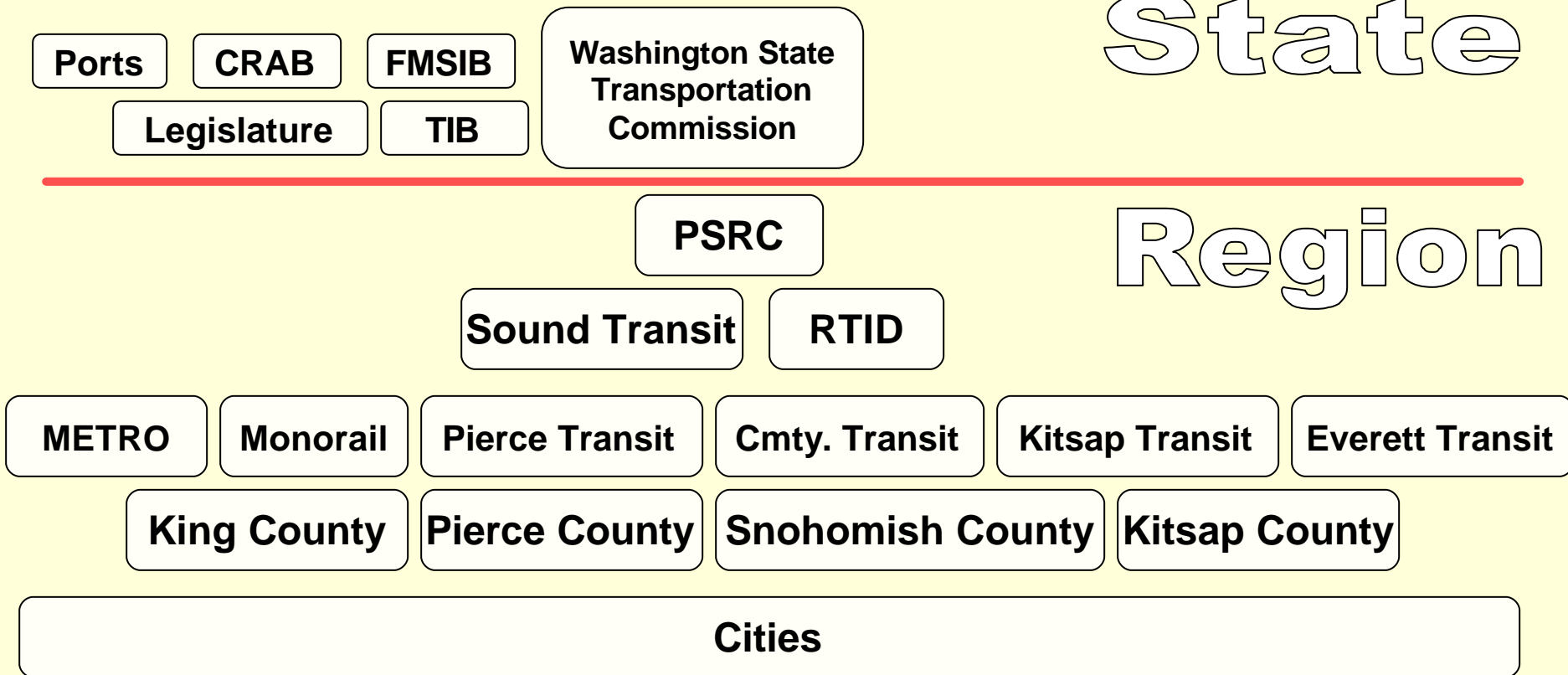
Compare and contrast:

- **Current model** – fragmented multiple authorizing organizations

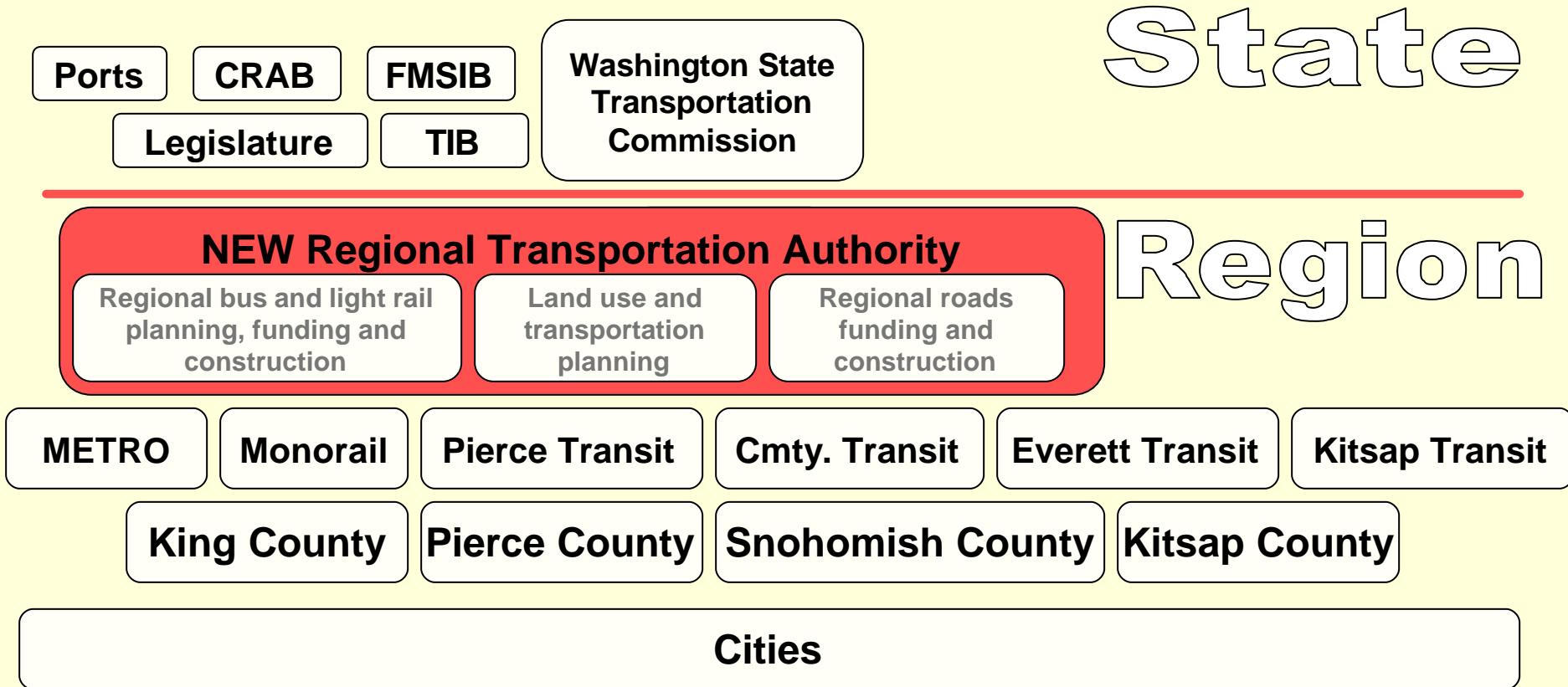
OR

- **A new regional agency** – consolidate non-operating structures, governed by directly elected officials with authority for all modes at regional level

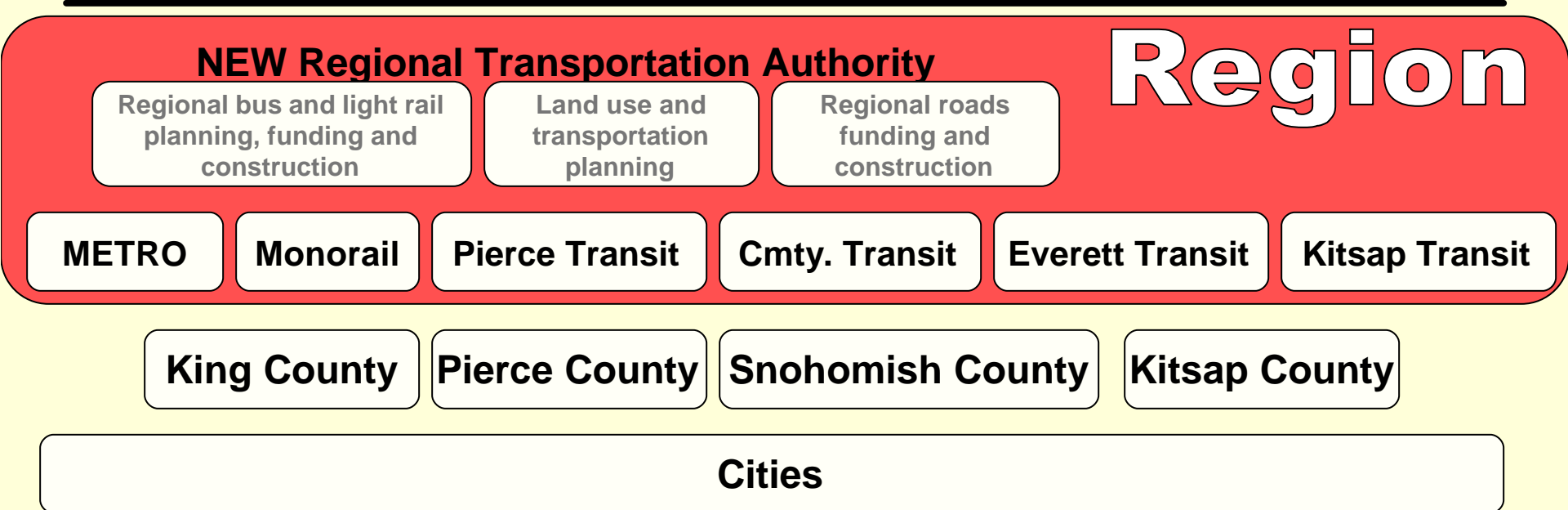
Current model



Regional authority model



Regional authority model on steroids



Some questions

- ? Which model delivers better **political accountability**, and thus likely better public support?
- ? Which model might improve the **authority** (ability) to raise and deploy revenue?
- ? Which model improves **integration** of modes, planning and prioritization of projects?
- ? What **priority** should we give transportation governance reform?